

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

JANUARY 19, 1891.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. MORRILL, from the Committee on Finance, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany S. 4724.]

The Committee on Finance, to whom was referred the bill (S. 4724 for the relief of John P. Downing, submit the following report:

It appears upon the evidence before the committee that John P. Downing, first paying teller in the subtreasury at Boston, Mass., on the 9th day of April, 1888, paid out on the check of Maj. G. C. Goodloe, paymaster U. S. Marines, said check being payable to the order of Maj. G. P. Houston, the sum of \$1,300.28, on the supposed indorsement of said Houston, which said indorsement was forged by First Sergeant Joseph M. Cassius, of said marines. Sergeant Cassius had for many years been the trusted and confidential agent of the commanding officer of marines at said Boston. He had presented before, from time to time, checks of this commanding officer, which had been properly indorsed.

On this occasion Sergeant Cassius had, a day or two before, deserted and stolen from the letter box, the key to which he had, the letter containing this check. He called upon Mr. Downing and said that as the check was payable to Maj. G. P. Houston, the major desired to know how the check should be indorsed—whether “G. P. Houston” or “Geo. Porter Houston,” the latter being the major’s usual form of signature. He was told to follow the wording of the check. He retired and in about an hour returned (still in his uniform, as usual,) with the check indorsed as directed, and was paid the amount called for by the check. He had with him as usual, what is called the “cash roll” of the marines and, as usual, went inside Mr. Downing’s counter and had the money paid out to him in such sums as would enable him to pay out again according to this cash roll. After several days it was discovered that the indorsement of Major Houston was forged. Mr. Downing at once made the amount good to the United States and followed Cassius until he was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to a term of five years in the penitentiary.

It appears that Mr. Downing has been paying teller at the Boston subtreasury for some twenty years, and is a most faithful and careful official, and that he had never before made a wrong payment; and your committee believe that the circumstances of this case were calculated to mislead any one, and that Mr. Downing is guilty of no laches, and ought not to suffer this loss, and therefore recommend the passage of the bill, with the following amendments:

In the tenth line, after the word "corps," insert the words "payable to the order of Major J. P. Houston, commanding United States Marines, Boston, Massachusetts;" and

In the eleventh line, after the word "subordinate," insert the words "at the Marine Barracks at said Boston;" and

In said eleventh line strike out the words "of the said Goodloe."

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